This is the answer I sent Gene: April 22, 1967

Dear Gene:

As I arrived here yesterday, from Zurich, your letter had just been placed atop a very large packet of mail awaiting my return. Naturally, I was anxious to read it + my inclination is to reply at once. I see Dr. Sargent on Tues. (25th) + Dr. Mason Wed (26th), but even without their advice I want to answer you.

At the moment, all I have heard from Jim about his retirement, in his last letter in Genoa, was the closing sentence that he had urged the pulpit committee to speed up their search for his successor, as the going was very heavy. I was not surprised, therefore, at your more definite date but I, like everyone else, am unprepared for the actual fact. It seems unbelievable in so many ways, + such a terrible personal loss to me, from any angle. I am glad you are there to fill the gap, for your successful experience of 2 years ago will surely strengthen the interim period.

To go at once to my own situation, in the 3 years or so you have known me you may have concluded I live or have lived a light-hearted + pleasure-filled existence. Bear with me while I outline just a few of the things I have met over the years:-

I was 18 when I saw my father die of angina within 5 hours, + altho' I have a brother 5 years older than I, I was forced by his marriage 1 month later to become "head" of a family almost overnight.

My college education was delayed, lengthened, + badly damaged accordingly.

My grandmother died one year later, + through the settling up of the estate deprived us of a home which had amounted practically to charity.

Before I was 30 my mother faced a breast cancer operation, which pinged to her lung, + only deep X ray stopped it from spreading, allowing her to live to be 82.

Following this, like others, my work was interrupted while I was in Europe with the Air Forces for 3 years.

After 10 years at Riverside, I was fired one Feb afternoon, without warning, + was later told by Jim that is was assumed I would not stay without Virgil, who they were actually after, but I was retired a month later, in the meantime having a mild heart attack which took me 2 years to by-pass.

After coming to Riverside I was obliged to go through with my aunt a similar breast-cancer operation, + took on the total care + expense of her, who is now living in Md. at 82.

Five years ago I faced the prolonged + tortured final illness +

death of my mother.

When Virgil & I came to Riverside in 1946, having no place to live, we bought an apartment at 552 Riverside Dr., with the verbal agreement that I would always have a percentage of the money invested each month. When our 34 year association ended 3 years ago, I lost over $15,000.00 I had counted on as mine, & had no proof of anything.

This last bitter experience must have so affected my mind & personality & physical health, that I have now been in the process, through the church's good graces, of restoring the damage done. This may sound to you like a long sob-story but I don't consider it that, for every step of the way a spiritual force has been present which has brought me up & onwards to better & fuller realisation. I, like many others, call it God. When I have pushed hardest for my way, when I have seen little hope of getting over or around some of these things, God has placed someone near me to strengthen, guide & steady me.

When you say I feel Jim has been my "mainstay", I can only agree for after 21 years of thinking of him as the head of the church, pastor & friend, & after he told me he had arranged this present plan, I have turned to him automatically.

I am not the person who went away Nov. 22nd, & I am sorry there is no way to prove to you or the Boards what I mean, by simply writing it down. I am stronger in my faith than ever in my life, & I have reviewed the above career to show you some of the tests I have passed, & through God's help went on. When you say: "I do not think for a minute you are capable" of living within the boundaries suggested, I know you can not understand how changed I have become. If it is the desire of the Boards to have you or anyone else audit the rehearsals, I welcome this with joy, for I know I am not the same person, tired, distraught, disillusioned, distrustful, bitter, etc. as I was. I, myself, had planned to have every rehearsal taped so I had proof of every detail. I am convinced I can do anything the church requires, with God's help, more certain than of anything I ever tackled. You say I ought to choose from "conviction & with my own self-respect", & this is what I feel I am doing.

Whatever has happened to & in me may be due to the great & generous gift of money, to the time allowed, but most of all the strengthening & improving has been caused by the fact that Jim & you & Carroll gave me your written word, & took public positions verbally, that I would be welcomed back in July. I have wrestled with other aspects of this, the loneliness, the uncertainty of 2 vitally

different doctors, the regular + trusting use of the medicine prescribed, the anonymous letters, the suggestions all writes of an undercurrent of wanting to find another way out. But, over + above it all has been my trust in all of you, + I have followed every order from Nov. to now.

You remind me that there are "many" of the choir who will resign if I return. It seems unfair to me to leave this so undefined, for I have just received a great quantity of Easter cards + messages, plus one signed by nearly every member of the choir, including the Jaegers. I am enclosing some, which I will get from you later, + retaining some with longer + detailed messages. Of course there may be or will be some who may leave, but they may not have been regularly in the choir before, anyhow; for example, Carolyn Rhodes, who came originally to the choir because she was so crazy for Fred she made a fool of herself. If the Jaegers are two, I am prepared and actually desire to write them personally + beg their forgiveness for past anger + misunderstandings. I have been very, very wrong in some things; can I not have a chance to go all the way with Christ to remedy my errors?

Have you or the Boards heard from any of the "positive" choir members? I have been writing all writes to quite a few + urge them + beg them to stay on out of concern for the church + Fred, not me. I sent a Christmas + Easter message stressing the need of loyalty to Fred, who was under such strain. One member, + a very good one, has already left, + I don't mean Anna Brandt, who has returned, I understand. Others have written that they are there only because it has been promised I will return in July. It seems only natural to me that some are loyal to me + some to Fred, + that some loss + some gain will occur. This would be true of any similar department in the church. When Jim preaches 2000-plus show-up, when someone else preaches, it drops down + brings different congregations.

You realize, of course, that I have never been confronted personally with any of these charges where I was allowed an explanation or defense. Perhaps I don't deserve one; I am not complaining, I am merely saying it is hard to be accused by your superiors + allowed no defense or confession. Dene Tyman never called me on anything, nor Carl Brandenburg, nor Albert Weidensaul, nor Ramsey McGrego, nor Bob Dodson, + Bill Rhoades complained mainly about choir department or the poor performance of an anthem. If you have known over 3 years what has been a growing problem, why didn't you really go at me full force? Maybe it was what I needed, having never had Jim or the music Chairmen do so. I am not basically evil, you surely believe that, + altho' I am 58 + you 40, you could have guided me, I am sure. Well, it is all

water over the dam, & maybe I am wrong to assume you could have saved me from this horrible experience. God has used it for good, I know!

So, out of my "self-respect" I am saying I can not back away from the issue and respect myself. I have given all of myself to Riverside for 21 years, and I have more & better to give, I know now. I have been given promises also that call for self-respect & honoring, don't you feel?

As I have sought to write all of this with God in my mind & heart, I hear God saying I must take the risk of being fired, for what seemed wise at the start is still wise, if those involved are just.

I ask you to do what you can, with God's guidance, to interpret some or all of this to the Boards or whoever. I am hoping for what I may not deserve, in spite of regret & sorrow, which is the judgement of Jesus. If I believe anything it is that I have been forgiven countless times for sins committed, for when I was deepest & lowest in troubles, His help came to lift me up. And, as I said early on in this letter: "God has placed someone near me"; that someone could be you, no one knows.

In all sincerity,

Dick